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PROJECTIONS FOR PLANNING: OPTIONS, ISSUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. BACKGROUND

The Requirement for Projections

1. A decade ago force planners in the Department of Defense requested projections of Warsaw Pact and Chinese forces, together with characteristics of weapon systems, as a basis for planning US forces. This request led, in 1964, to the Intelligence Assumptions for Planning, (IAP) and then in 1965-1970 to the National Intelligence Projections for Planning (NIPP). The non-military components of the Intelligence Community, however, were uneasy about passing upon the large amount of detail in these projections, especially insofar as it dealt with weapons systems or forces that were not of immediate interest to the national policy formulation machinery of the NSC that national intelligence was designed to support. Consequently the DCI decided that these projections, being of primary interest to the Department of Defense, should be done within the DOD.

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The result was that the NIPP became the DIPP, with Defense taking the place of National. The DIPP has, since 1971, been produced by DIA and coordinated with NSA and the intelligence components of the services, in continuing response to the requirements of the DOD planners.

2. The IAP, NIPP, and DIPP all followed certain "rules" with regard to probability which had originally been laid down by the DOD planners. The projections were to represent the best estimate of the Soviet or Chinese approach to force building, and then to project a range of forces, in accord with this approach, which bounded likely developments. That is, it was estimated there was about a 75 percent chance that the true figure, when it came to pass, would lie within the range given.

3. The new NSC policy machinery under the guidance of Dr. Kissenger requested, however, a different approach to projections. They also requested, now that the Defense projections were no longer national, that the NIEs project those forces of interest to them in a manner that they could use for their purposes. The NSC machinery, concerned with presenting options for decision, saw projections as representing different options open to the Soviet or Chinese policy maker. They requested projections that represented

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alternative policies and models of force building. In short, they did not wish a *best* estimate; rather they wished a range of projections which would illustrate alternative feasible Soviet courses of action under different assumptions. This was clearly a different approach to projections than was requested in the NIPP and DIPP. The policy maker, concerned with broad options of policy direction and approach, wished opposing forces presented in the same manner. The defense planner, concerned with building US forces, wished to confine his options more narrowly and to have more extensive detail. Each approach was, and remains, valid in terms of its intended purpose.

The Practical Problems

4. The existence of alternative sets of projections, however, drawn up under different ground rules for different purposes, has led to some confusion among those using the projections. The problem was not really solved by explaining in the NIEs that the NIE projections were for use by the national policy machinery for their purposes, and that the DOD planner should use the DIPP. Different consumers used whatever projection best suited their purposes.

5. DIA, in particular, is concerned about the confusion, and has proposed that the best solution to the problem would be to

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take the projections out of the NIE. If the NSC machinery were were content to have alternative projections as a CIA output, not a national intelligence product, this would work. But, to date, the NSC Staff's request that the alternative projections remain national is still operative. The purpose of the remainder of this memorandum is to explore alternative solutions and to recommend a course of action.

II. OPTIONS

A: *Put All Projections in NIEs*

The idea of putting all projections and accompanying weapons and force tables into the NIEs would solve the problem, but would raise many more, and has always been rejected for several reasons:

For

1. NIE and DIPP projections would not be at odds, as the latter would not exist.
2. The projections would all be given a national imprimatur, as required by the NSC machinery.

Against

1. The NIEs are thought of as relatively short statements concerning major developments and policy issues. Including the detail found in the NIPP and DIPP in the NIEs is clearly inappropriate.

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For

Against

2. NIEs tend to be problem and issue oriented, and do not pretend to adopt the across-the-board approach required for DOD planners, who desire a package that will deal with all force elements and weapon systems.

3. The NIEs are published upon request, whereas the DIPP is done in response to an annual cycle.

4. The non-military agencies do not wish to coordinate the great body of detail required by the DOD planner.

B: Transform DIPP into a National Publication, but Publish Alternative Projections in other Departmental Publications

This would be a return to the NIPP situation. The DIPP would be produced within the framework and machinery of national intelligence production, and alternative projections would be produced by CIA, State, or other intelligence components for use by consumers as they saw fit.

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For

1. There would be one set of nationally approved projections, thereby avoiding confusion.

Against

1. The arguments against the NIPP would still hold:

- a. The non-military intelligence agencies would not wish to pass upon it all;
- b. There is no requirement for all the detail to be put in a national projection.

2. The requirement of the NSC machinery, that there be alternative national projections, would not be met.

C: Transform DIPP into a National Publication Including Alternative Projections

This would be a return to the NIPP situation, with the change that the present NSC standing requirements would be met. The national projections would also include force projections and weapons systems illustrative of other force approaches than those considered to be most likely.

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For

1. It would permit the NIE to concentrate on major developments, issues, and judgments, and yet retain a vehicle for detailed projections.

2. It would give a national imprimatur to the illustrative projections, as required by the NSC machinery, and yet present them in an explicit relationship to the projections as required by DOD planners.

3. It could be a vehicle for systematically reviewing, at the national level, the basic projections.

Against

1. The arguments against the NIPP would still hold:

a. The non-military intelligence agencies would not wish to pass upon it all;

b. There is no requirement for all the detail to be put in a national projection.

D: Keep DIPP as It is, and Publish Alternative Projections in Other Departmental Publications

Under this approach the alternative projections illustrative of other approaches would be published by CIA, State, or whoever felt inclined to do so, but they would not appear in a national intelligence publication.

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For

1. There would be no national projections to be at odds with DIPP projections.

Against

1. The requirement of the NSC machinery, that there be alternative national projections, would not be met.

E: Keep Present System but Make It Work Better

A method of making the present system work could be to identify some of the projections in the NIEs as the best, and/or the range of the likely, so they can then be used as the DIPP projections, and clearly identify other projections in the NIE as alternative, less likely projections, that would be appropriate only under some specific assumptions.

For

1. This would require no substantial changes in the present procedures. It would only require that the military intelligence agencies address the NIE projections and develop projections they could agree with in concert with the non-military agencies.

Against

1. If consumers now use projections from the NIE that are stated to be less than likely, what is to prevent them from doing so in the future? Moreover, the confusion of multiple projections in multiple documents would continue.

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III. BASIC ISSUES

The arguments for and against these options indicate there are certain basic issues that must be answered.

1. *Should detailed projections and weapons systems characteristics continue to be presented as in the NIPP and the DIPP?*

The requirements by the DOD for such projections is the one continuing requirement over the past decade, and would appear to be fundamental. Such detailed projections should continue to be published.

2. *Should these detailed projections be departmental or national?*

There is no positive requirement that detailed projections be national. There is, in fact, considerable opposition to having all the detail approved nationally. This is to some degree balanced by the concept that national review of the major projections would improve intelligence projections for whatever purpose. There thus appears to be a reason for having national agreement on the major projections and systems characteristics, but not on the minor projections and characteristics.

3. *Should detailed projections appear in the NIES?*

Detailed projection have never appeared in the NIEs, for good reason, and we certainly should not move in that direction now.

4. *Should there be alternative illustrative projections of the major systems? Should they be national?*

As long as the NSC machinery requests that such projections appear in a national intelligence document, we should meet the requirement.

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The requirement could be met by having the alternative illustrative projections in an NIE, in a national projections document, or in some other national intelligence document, such as a National Intelligence Analytical Memorandum (NIAM).

5. *Should alternative illustrative projections be presented along with best estimate projections, and projections of the likely range (high and low)?*

There is some justification for alternative illustrative projections appearing alongside of and in the same document as projections of the best estimate and the likely range of developments. In this manner, the differences in assumption could be explicitly described and delineated, and the distinctions set forth between the those projections considered to be likely and those considered to be unlikely.

6. *Should these likely and alternative projections be in an NIE, a NIAM, or in a national projection document?*

If NIEs are to be short, address major problems and issues, and give major conclusions, there plainly is no room for alternative projections, including best and likely projections, to be portrayed and explained in the NIE proper. It would have to be done in the supporting analysis as it is now, or in a NIAM. As the presentation and explanation of alternative illustrative projections is an analytical technique undertaken for purposes of further policy analysis, there is a strong case for doing this in a separate NIAM written specifically for this purpose. A national projection document would not then have to go into all the rationale and analytical explanation of alternative forces, if in fact, it presented them at all.

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IV. RECOMMENDATION

From the discussion above, the best approach to projections appears to involve the following:

- Detailed projections, of primary interest to the DOD planner, should continue, as departmental productions.
- Projections of the major systems, of interest to the NSC machinery, be presented in a NIAM prepared specifically for this purpose, to include laying out the best projection, limits to the probable levels of deployment under the most likely policy course, and projections illustrating alternative courses of policy or assumptions as to force building. The NIAM would explain the nature of and the reasons for the differences in assumptions, judgments, etc.
- In the creation of the NIAM, DIA would have responsibility for creating the best projection and the ranges upon it, while CIA would be responsible for the structure and rationale of the alternatives. Their integration would be under the chairmanship of an NIO appointee. Needless to say, there would be a large amount of exchange of ideas, estimates, and assumptions before the final product was agreed to, but this interchange would improve related NIEs and departmental projections.

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--The departmental projections would utilize the best and the ranged projections derived in the NIAM. They would thus be both national and departmental.

This approach will:

- Keep projections of interest to the NSC machinery at the national level, and put them in the proper analytical framework, but not in the NIE.
- Assure that major projections are reviewed and produced within the national intelligence structure.
- Not require that projections primarily in response to DOD requirements be reviewed by non-military intelligence components.

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